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RE: Berlin's 833, Bonn's 2175

Following for your info selected excerpts Department spokesman's comments at noon briefing March 31 concerning buzzing American transport:

Q. How about this report that one of our planes was buzzed in Berlin air corridor?

A. Yes, it is true that Soviet jet fighters did buzz American Air Force transport March 27. Similar incidents have occurred from time to time in air corridors. In this case, as in other cases normal channel of handling such incidents is Berlin Air Safety Center; and I think our people & there have launched protest on this matter.

Q. The story that I saw said this was different thing from previous incidents, in that Russians attempted to establish principle that corridor applied only up to 10,000 feet. Do you have anything on that?

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A. The American transport plane was flying at an altitude which is customary for operations this type plane. United States has never accepted any altitude ceilings on its rights operate in air corridors to and from Berlin.

Q. Do you know whether this is first time Russians have attempted establish this ceiling in corridors?

A. I ~~like~~ better not say just off top my head. It is first time I personally have heard of it.

Q. ~~Is~~ Is this an every day occurrence or --

A. Oh, no.

Q. -- or once or twice in the past?

A. No. I frankly don't know. There have been several incidents.

Q. And what do we do? We protested to Berlin Air Safety Center?

A. This is correct.

Q. We don't appeal them beyond?

A. This is normal channel. I am not saying we will not go beyond that, nor am I saying we will at ~~xx~~ this stage. This is normal channel which currently being used.

Q. But I mean others haven't gone beyond Berlin Air Safety Center?

A. Not my knowledge, NO.

Q. Link, when you say we haven't recognized any ceiling on corridor, does that mean we will continue fly planes in at whatever altitude is normal altitude?

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A. Of course, certainly.

Q. Is this first time this new type plane has been flown in?

A. No

Q. Has United States received any official notification from Soviets about 10,000 feet ceiling?

A. No, sir.

Q. Do you know whether ~~there~~ there is any basis at all for feeling they want impose such ceiling?

A. I think they made protest to our people in Center on this, and counter protest was made on buzzing. I am not certain that counter ~~make~~ protest — whether oral or written — made point that I am making here, that we have never accepted any altitude ceiling, but I would assume that it did.

Q. You say you think they made protest to our people at Center on this. You mean you think they protested that our planes were flying above 10,000 feet.

Q. Have British and French planes been buzzed in similar fashion?

A. They have from time to time; commercial transport planes have been buzzed from time to time.

Q. In making their protest to Berlin Air Safety Center, did Soviets make point that they believe our rights in air corridor go no higher than 10,000 feet?

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A. If you don't mind, I will read you your ticker.

Q. We are asking these questions because we are trying to get the feel of this thing as it develops officially.

A. That is right. As of now we have protested buzzing. Soviet Union in turn, has protested that no American plane -- I am reading from ticker story now -- may fly above 10,000 feet when crossing East Germany to and from West Berlin. That is where it rests as of now. Protests have been exchanged within Berlin Air ~~Security~~ ^{Safety} Center.

Q. As matter fact, do you know whether we have been flying these planes into Berlin at altitude higher than 10,000 feet all along?

A. I do not know specifically; I would certainly assume so, because the C-130 flies at rather high altitude for best efficiency that plane.

Q. Historically have they been trying to insist upon this principle for long time?

A. Somebody asked me that ~~ex~~ earlier and I said I better not guess on that. To my personal knowledge this is first time they have raised this.

Q. Which protest came first -- theirs or ours?

A. As a matter of fact, I think ~~their~~ theirs came first.

Q. We have no intention of accepting any such limit.

A. That is right.

Q. What is schedule on future flights? Are we going in regularly?

A. I am sorry, this is Air Force business. I am telling you

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what I know about it. I don't know how many go in, etc.

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